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ESTABLISHING AN INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM--RHETORICAL AND ANALYTICAL APPROACHES, UPPER ELEMENTARY GRADES.

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RHETORICAL AND ANALYTICAL APPROACHES FOR ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM ARE PRESENTED. THE ASSUMPTION THAT IF THE EXPERIENCES ARE PLEASURABLE, THE CHILD WILL CONTINUE TO READ IS BASIC TO THE TOTAL APPROACH. THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM AND PROCEUDRES FOR DETERMINING THE CHILD'S RECREATIONAL, INSTRUCTIONAL, AND FRUSTRATION READING LEVELS ARE DESCRIBED. DIRECTIVES ARE GIVEN FOR PUPIL ORIENTATION AND FOR TEACHER GUIDANCE OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH. PLANS PROVIDE FOR READING MATERIALS, SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISES, SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION, AND CONFERENCES FOR THE EVALUATION OF PUPIL PROGRESS. SAMPLES OF RECORDS, SKILL-BUILDING EXERCISES, AND DIRECTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING THEM ARE INCLUDED. (MC)

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BOSTON-NORTHAMPTON

LANGUAGE ARTS PROGRAM

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PROJECTS TO ADVANCE CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION

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UPPER ELEMENTARY GRADES

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INTRODUCTION

An individualized reading program offers the child an opportunity to acquaint himself with the wide world of literature. If this experience is a pleasurable one the child may, hopefully, continue to read. The following pages attempt to present the establishment of an individualized reading program as it would be used in a classroom. It is the writer's opinion that the teacher should spend the majority of the reading period in guiding the students to achieve the desired directional outgrowth of learning skills. Burying the teacher behind the Reading Conference Table allows no time for adequate group or individual child contact. A proposed program of this nature must be well organized, and so must be the teacher.

Statistics show that more books are being read today than ever before, however, they are not being read by the mass public. High school and college students, teachers, etc., comprise the bulk of the frequent library visitors and the average readers. During a child's school years, kindergarten through high school, how many books does he read which have not been assigned? How many does he read just for his or her own personal pleasure? The elementary school can offer this chance to the child. If this experience is enjoyable he may continue to visit the library and to read.

ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

One to two weeks seems necessary to establish a cohesive individualized reading program. During this time tests can be administered to determine each child's reading ability including instructional and frustrational levels. There are many standardized tests available which can be given individually or in group testing situations to help analyze a child's instructional and frustrational levels. The teacher's manual for the Ginn Basic Reader provides a section for testing of oral reading levels. These results give a foundation upon which a teacher can more easily guide each child toward a proper book selection and a more enjoyable reading experience. It is necessary to note that a child's pleasure reading, for his own reading satisfaction, will often be below these instructional and frustrational levels. Instruction can be given within the context of the pleasure reading activity as well as at the instructional level of a child's ability.

One problem which I encountered at this point was that of pupil achievement. It is relatively simple to administer tests, screen abilities, chart interests, etc., but what does all this mean in an individualized reading situation? The magical stigmas--"slow learner," "below average," "average," and "above average"--have been eliminated. No longer are there three or four basic reading groups with an equal set of lesson plans. Each child becomes a reading group unto himself with his own special set of lesson plans in order to best fulfill his needs. What types of learning experiences and enjoyment are to be gained from an individualized reading program which might not be received in another approach to reading? Could you answer this question?

Many books and articles have been written which discuss in great detail the many aspects of reading and language arts which enter the area of teaching of reading. A teacher should spend some time reading and evaluating that which authorities have written before deciding on the proper approach to reading which he will use. Whatever the choice, it will be one made independently after careful thought and consideration. It is then the teacher, not the children, who must decide whether or not his is the best program for the children he will be will be working with. If the teacher is not sure, satisfied, or willing to work, the program will not be successful.

First Session

During the time allotted for reading I began to orient the children to the manner in which we would conduct our reading periods. As the children were already familiar with basic readers, workbooks, study sheets, etc., we began by discussing similarities and differences which they would be encountering in our individualized program. Such questions as these could be used to begin:

Why do we read?

When do we read? (Pleasure as well as assigned)

How do you go about selecting a book to read?

Is it fun to read something which you are not interested in?

Should each of us choose the same book?

Why would you tend to choose a different book from what your best friend might be reading?

From the discussion involving these ideas the teacher should try to create a favorable group atmosphere and receptiveness to the concept of individualized reading. An appreciation for the art of reading should be developed. The children should be led to the conclusion that it is not wise to read what their best friend is reading for they may differ in reading preferences; to best enjoy a book, the reader's interest should be considered, not that of his friend. If you think a book might be worth reading, examine it. Look at the cover and the inside flaps. Perhaps there is a synopsis or some information about the author. Who is the author? Maybe you are familiar with this author from another one of his books which you greatly enjoyed and somehow have never forgotten. Leaf through the pages to check the size of type, as this often has a great influence on the reader's enjoyment. A poor reader needs the encouragement of a fast moving story printed in large type, whereas a more proficient reader will look for something which will last for awhile-often smaller type and thicker books. Pictures follow the same general trend as type. Many children whose imagination is not well developed look for books which have colorful, attractive pictures to help make the reading more understandable. Children with a better mastery of words and pictorial sense prefer fewer pictures as this allows their imagination to flow freely with the context of the book.

Recommend that the child, while examining the book, stop on one page and try to read a few lines or possibly a paragraph or so to be sure if he likes it. Here, the teacher's task becomes one of guidance according to the child's level of reading difficulty and interest. Try to give the children an understanding of the various styles, context and structural techniques which authors use. Analysis and evaluation can thus be used with the young readers in developing their attitudes toward the written material. This helps discourage the

idea of simply snatching a book off the shelf just to get the whole thing over with; grabbing the book because of its well-designed cover; or returning a book after reading only the first few pages because it was boring.

To further emphasize the importance of an on-the-spot inspection the teacher could demonstrate the proper selection of a book by orally considering its value to a reader. Here it is necessary to try appealing to some of the children within the classroom who might not otherwise consider trying to read.

In general, an analysis such as the following was used as a demonstration for the children:

1. Choose a book by its aesthetic and sensory appeal ("My, this book looks interesting!")

2. Read the inside covers or flaps for further information about author or story content

3. Read the title page for information provided about the author, title, publisher and publishing date, etc. (Good reinforcement in children's mind as to location of such details)

4. Examine the Table of Contents

5. Ask yourself, "Am I still interested?"

   a- No!--Why not?--If satisfied with the answer then place the book in its proper location or book return area and look for another.

   b- Yes!--Then let's take a "sneak preview" by flipping through the pages.
      1- size of type used
         (a) too big
         (b) too small
         (c) about right
      2- pictures
         (a) not enough
         (b) not colorful enough
         (c) too small
         (d) fuzzy
         (e) other
      3- read a few lines
         (a) easy reading
         (b) ideas too wild to understand
         (c) too many new words to tackle all at once
         (d) strange setting--foreign to reader
         (e) unusual style of writing or colloquial conversation which is difficult to read
         (f) too many characters to keep straight
         (g) other

6. Still want to check it out and try reading the story?

This type of on-the-spot evaluating may seem ridiculous and time consuming at first; however, if you have to keep track of children and books for a room library or librarian you will soon become aware of the many who take out great numbers of books, and soon return them to the book shelves because they are still displeased, and are consequently reading very little. The development of these concepts creates a new objective interest in a book. The child becomes more absorbed in thinking as well as in reading.

A couple of the children should attempt to evaluate to decide honestly whether they would choose the book or not, and why. Eventually the children will decide on an evaluating system which is similar in nature to the one which you wish them to use. Depending on the children involved they may wish to make a group chart or bulletin board for display and reference.

Following this discussion, begin your first book sharing session. For the majority of the time this will be handled by the teacher, although now and then a child will find a book he particularly wishes to share. When this occurred, I would relinquish part of our book sharing period to this child to introduce us to his treasure which he had so much enjoyed. This should not become a common occurrence as the purpose of this time is to introduce new books to the children, not a time for oral reporting. A normal sharing period would run approximately fifteen to twenty minutes in length. This depends on the group interest in the story. The first book which we shared together was entitled, "The Enormous Egg." I had placed the book on the bookshelf early so that it would be within easy reach. Before beginning the story we first examined the book as previously suggested.

Teacher: "The title certainly is unusual and thought provoking."

Child: "What could it be about?"

Many suggestions were offered. In general the children agreed it left much to the imagination. They all wanted to find out more about the book. Together we examined the title page and table of contents with the aid of an overhead projector. The book was next opened to a spot containing no pictures and placed in the overhead projector. We read the top half of the page orally. The children debated the question of word usage; most of them believed the usage adequate for their reading ability. The size of type was considered satisfactory for easy readability, and as one of the children commented, "It's not too fat of a book either!" Now a page was found containing a picture and again placed in the overhead projector. Even though only black and white illustrations were used, the children seemed enthused in finding out more about this particular book as we plunged into the oral reading of our story.

Upon concluding our book sharing period we worked on a group skill. The first group skills selected offered more enjoyment than true skill building, although many children need strengthening of previously learned language principles. Skill building exercises which the whole class would be working with were either dittoed or in the form of charts. For my own use I made a series of "Exercises" on a flip chart and mounted it on a chart holder. It is easy to handle material thus displayed as it permits mobility of material to various areas of the room and also allows movement of children. Often, to increase their interest and to appear more informal, I asked the children to gather near the chart. Many of these exercises lend themselves well to use with a tape

recorder (the writer's favorite teaching aid). At first many children showed fear of being recorded; however, with frequent use this anxiety slowly faded. Choral speaking activities were used with the children as well as various written lessons.

This should take the remainder of your first regularly scheduled reading period. Any spare time could be utilized by the students in further examination of the books which are in the room for your reading program.

To increase attractiveness of the newly proposed individualized reading program the books should be logically grouped, and if possible, displayed or exhibited around the room. Book jackets may be used for bulletin board displays and books themselves may be on a hook-n-loop board. Three or four book jackets or books plus a phrase, short sentence, or brief question to help draw the children's attention, provides sufficient material for attractive, uncluttered display. The display can also be changed more frequently if only three or four books are chosen for exhibit at a time. Sometimes this is an easy way to acquaint the children with selections which would otherwise go unnoticed, thus enhancing the circulation of all the available books. There will, of course, always be certain books which are the favorites of a particular class or age group.

Second Session

The structure of our second reading session becomes more closely aligned with the manner in which the daily reading activities are to be performed. We first make a resume of our findings from the initial session. To further instill the ideas of book selection which we had discussed, they were placed on the chalkboard. After more details have been added and the ideas refined, the remaining sentences would make an excellent child-made reference chart. The chart could be displayed near the area where the children select their books as a good visual reminder.

The title and author of the book we were reading for our book sharing period was mentioned as well as the skill building exercise which the class completed prior to the start of our second session. The children were encouraged to seek out the reason for working on the exercise and how it could aid them, rather than remembering the exact material or word usage. This helps the child to abstract ideas and draw conclusions from specific presented material. The few minutes thus spent in review proves very profitable as it quickens the children's minds for the task at hand.

The children seem to enjoy the book sharing portion of the individualized reading program. For this reason we place it at the beginning of the reading program (except for the first session). A brief summary of the story ensued before continuing orally with the story for fifteen to twenty minutes,depending upon the group atmosphere and interest. Conclude the book sharing period by asking one or two questions requiring insight into the story's future plot development. This encourages the children to think about the book and its characters.

The skill building exercise should come next to relax the children. Dittoed material involving the ability to follow directions could be used. This allows an opportunity for the teacher to observe the ways in which the children tackle exercises in written form. Teacher interest and direction still need to be felt by the children which requires the teacher's continual appraisal of the situation and each child's accomplishments. If done early in the program, the children will develop a sense of assurance and confidence about his efforts as he goes forth on his own. He will be better able to solve many problems or proceed into another area until the teacher is free to help him.

The second session discussion period centers around the various types of reading material which the children might be interested in. If handled in an interesting manner the children will begin to sense the vast horizon which opens to them as their interest in literature broadens, for example, a child enthralled with horse stories could be guided into: other animal stories, animals of foreign lands, helpers and friends of animals, adventure stories, wilderness adventures--thus, slowly and gradually developing a variety of areas for a young inquiring mind. You will find this a helpful asset to be able to take one idea (which is all many children have, know, or admit to) and broaden it

to create new reading areas for a child.

Choose several interesting books. Place them wherever you wish to hold your discussion with the children. In order to present each book in an interesting manner and to build up the students' inquisitiveness and desire to read the book, it is necessary that the teacher read it before the presentation. The upper elementary grades see an ever-widening range of reading abilities, yet each child should feel a desire to take part in the reading of books on the level at which he will achieve success. Teacher, friend, guide to literature--these seem to be the hardest goals for the teacher to achieve, but they are some of the essential ingredients to the individualized reading program's continuation. Here are some suggested books used with fourth grade students in studies done by the Northwestern University Curriculum Center in English (published 1965):

"Angelino and the Barefoot Saint"
"Rabbit Hill"
"Charlotte's Web"
"Pinkey Pye"
"The Good Master"
"More Homer Price"

In addition I have found several other books and a few authors the children in the upper elementary grades seem to enjoy. These are only recommendations should you wish to use them. You could consider the following the popular choices of the children I have worked with:

Authors

Robert McCloskey
Kate Seredy
Jay Williams & R. Abrashkin
Maud Lovelace
Laura E. Wilder
Margarette Henry
Farley
Lenski
Orton

Books

"A Diller a Dollar" —nonsense poetry
"An Angel in the Woods"

"Bear Called Paddington" --and its sequel
"Black Gold"
"Black Stallion Returns" --complete series good
"Blue Willow"

"Centerburg Tales"
"Cricket in Times Square"

"Danny Dunn and the Homework Machine" --complete series
"Dr. Doolittle" --complete series good
"Door in the Wall"

"Farmer Boy"
Florence Nightingale

"Helen Keller"

"I Saw You From Afar"
"If Wishes Were Horses"

"Lady Cake Farm"
"Little Lame Prince"

"Miss Charity Comes to Stay"

"Oh What Nonsense" --nonsense poetry
"Old Yeller" --and its sequel
"Onion John"

"Paddle to the Sea"

"Race to Nome"

"Screwball"
"Sea Starr"
"The Secret Garden"
"Shoo Fly Girl"
"Sold to the Lady in the Green Hat"
"Strawberry Girl"

"The Village That Slept"

"Who's in Charge of Lincoln"

Classify each book presented. Ask the children what kind of book they think it is, or what subject area it deals with. Write the category on the chalkboard as brought out in relation to the book. Some books will lend themselves to more than one classification. If each of these categories given by the children seems suitable, include all of them. This could also furnish an opportunity for a group experience with outlining, depending on the children's suggestions. For example, "Lifeline" could be listed as a book about Science or, more specifically, Anatomy; "Patterns in the Sky," while also about Science, would best be listed as Astronomy. On the chalkboard it could be sublisted and discussed accordingly:

Science - a general area of study
    Anatomy
    Astronomy

As the goal is to formulate a concept of book classification by broad subject areas, it is advisable to choose books relating to various subjects. Generally, such categories as fantasy, humor, biography, history, sports, animal, and science are used by the children.

A maximum of seven to ten books could be dealt with during the time alloted. Make careful notes of the topical areas derived from the discussion for use during the next session. Hopefully, books are becoming more interesting to the children as their curiosity about novels, etc., grows.

Third Session

Review the work of the previous sessions. Encourage the children to formulate their own ideas, not to repeat word for word the context of the last session. Clarify any misconceptions, and supplement their ideas when necessary.

Continue with the book sharing portion of the individualized reading program. An abbreviated synopsis of the story should, as usual, precede the oral reading of the novel. Again, conclude the book sharing period by asking at least one question requiring thought as to the future plot development.

By now many of the children have started formulating their own literary priority list. The skill building activity could, therefore, be in the nature of a questionnaire constructed to bring out the child's book preferences in a written form. A completion sheet including partial sentences makes provision for a more logical sequence to answer. It also offers the information which you wanted in the order that you wanted it. This sheet should yield insight into the child's ability in: outside activities, hobbies, techniques in sentence structure, word usage, vocabulary development, etc. Use this paper and other testing devices as guides in developing an effective instructional program to fit the needs of the class.

The discussion period should be similar to that of the second session. Do not spend as much time with book classifying in order to allow an interim for the children to make their own book selection before the close of the period. Decide on a written means of relatively simple record keeping which the children will be required to do with each book. This record should contain the title of the book, author, date started and finished, and list of new words and phrases. I have used a 3x5 or 5x8 note card system and secretarial spiral notebooks. Both have their merits. The main thing is to have a handy guide to check when the teacher wishes. Record keeping is part of this kind of reading program, more than any other program. Most of the children cooperate quite well in keeping track of what they are reading, and what they want to do. It is a good idea to check with the children regularly to be sure both you and the class are up-to-date and correct. If they know you are going to be checking they will try even harder to have everything in order, which helps tremendously! Illustrate the pattern for recording that you wish followed on a bulletin board or display that can be easily seen, referred to and used by the children. A mimeographed form card may be desired instead as it cuts down the children's errors.

Insist on a quiet, orderly room. While some children select books, others could start their record keeping; the more methodical might need to complete their written assignment; and others may begin their silent reading. The room discipline established by the teacher is now put to the test. Each child, regardless of the number of children in the classroom, must pursue the art of self direction, personal achievement, and completion of requested and chosen assignments. (Thus far I have found most children overeager--desiring to do

everything.) Once they see that they are setting their own goal without interference everything changes. One of the boys in my class expressed it quite well when he said, "I've got an important game going between me and myself and I'm winning." Another child commented, "At least it's more like fun now, so I don't mind doing it so much."

Add a note of evaluation to the end of the session. Ask the children to think for a moment about a couple of questions as if they were asking themselves and expecting logical answers.

Did I accomplish what I wanted during my reading period?

Did I really do any reading?

Did I learn something new? What?

Was I courteous to others?

You could easily formulate your own questions. Try to phrase them so that they help each child objectively evaluate his own progress. Attempt to have this self-evaluation process at the close of every reading session.

Fourth Session

The fourth session allows the program to function on its own. The procedures followed continue in a similar sequence. Begin with a review of prime facts. Clarify or redirect the children's thoughts to reinforce concepts. The book sharing period should come next, summing up the plot development before proceeding on to the oral reading, and concluding with at least one question concerning the story's probable outcome.

In substance, the established order of the day remains constant. During this session we start to blend the skill building exercise, silent reading, and individual conference periods to allow a longer time segment to work with the class according to its needs. The skill building activity, for example, once introduced, could be worked on by the children later or infiltrated into other areas of study depending on the children's ability. Spend time classifying books as suggested during the third session. Emphasize, also, some of the procedures which should be used in selecting a book. At this point ask the children if anyone believes he is ready for a conference. We placed a conference list on the chalkboard to enable the child to see when it is his turn. Demonstrating the conference procedures you wish followed might be helpful. Most children quickly pick up the way in which you want it conducted. I prefer a more liberal approach, letting the child lead the discussion when feasible. However, I did request the child to begin with:

"The title of my book is...."

"The author of my book is...."

The child was to have a passage selected for oral reading. From this point each conference was different which, to me, was the joy of such instructional methods. Thus it is possible to direct the teaching to the child's needs and interests. If he is interested in plot structures you can spend time with him to show him how it functions in the novel, etc. The teacher has endless possibilities in instruction and guidance.

Should the combined session create too high a noise level for proper concentration in the room, a segment of time should be set aside for nothing but silent reading. At the close of the period check with the class to reassure yourself that they have completed the assignments according to direction. Evaluate the day's individualized reading program with the children as previously recommended in the past session. Also, take a few moments to appraise the progress which the class has made in accordance with your expectations for the program. If you are not satisfied, it is time to alter your reading plans to better suit your desired results.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS RELATING TO PROGRAM

By the end of the fourth session the reading plan has been explained, demonstrated and attempted. The fifth and following sessions should show continuity within the classroom as the teacher and class work together. The pattern has been established and should be in action--the children have their own reading material, areas of study or interest relating to his book and skill building exercises; the teacher must introduce the day's agenda, work with children on individual and small group skills, as well as the reading conferences. (My own terminology for this is "organized confusion.")

The children need to feel that you are just as concerned about their books as they are. Don't hide the fact that you have not read a certain book, either. The questions the teacher asks and the teacher's attitude when conversing with the children about their books and ideas mean a great deal. Forget the conventional, "Why did you like this story?" type questioning. Dig into the book with the child, sharing the experience of reading the novel with him--not offering it to him in exchange for simple "Yes" or "No" responses. Present leading ideas and questions which will make the child think; for example:

"How would the story have changed if Tom had been the main character instead of Steve?"

"Did the fact that this story took place in _____ have any bearing on its real meaning?"

"How would the story have changed if you tried to place it in America instead of _____?"

"How does the character of George change through the story?"

"How would the story have been affected if the first two (or possibly three) chapters had been eliminated?"

"What would happen to the story if the main character were removed within the first three chapters?"

"If the people in the story had been animals, what would each of them have been?" (In some cases it is advisable to ask them for verification from within the story for the judgment.)

"What five sentences could you write to explain the whole story to me?" (Especially good for mysteries.)

"Why did you dislike Mrs. Beans in the story?" (Here I try to show the child the difference between a personal feeling and an author's intended response.)

"In what ways is this story realistic?"

"Whom did you feel closet to in the story?" and, "Did this feeling change throughout the story?"

"Do you feel the story is really finished?"

"What descriptive words would you use to draw a word picture of Jane?"

"If you had been Alice, what choice would you have made?"

"What word picture was the writer trying to convey when _____?"

"How does the author develop the setting for his story?"

"How would you compare this book with _____ which you previously read?"

"What is the significance of the title?" (If possible have the child consider this as a research question in order for him to search for a specific idea, chapter, page, or section to verify his response.)

"Where would you most like to read this book?" Many books have an atmosphere about them which gives you a perfect feeling of where to read it--classroom, under a large shade tree, home, by a brook, etc.)

By talking to the child about his book you can help him to think, to view the printed material in such a way as to make it more meaningful to him than words on a printed page. Did the child really read the story? You can tell soon enough, even if you have not read it yourself. Besides, he will want to read it if he thinks you want to talk to him about it. Once he believes that his opinions are meaningful to the reading conference, he will start bringing them to the conference with him. That is when the fun begins. Who is right? Is there a source that we could use to verify our ideas? If a child becomes engrossed in what he's doing he doesn't worry about anything else--he is happy and he is learning. Should a particular subject interest a child above all others, I do not make a determined effort to guide the child into other areas or materials if it is against his wishes. The fact that the child is reading satisfies for the present. I have found that eventually a child can be swayed without great pressure.

The working factors of the sessions may be summarized as follows:

1. Introductory period

   a- Review of previous work
      1- teacher directed
      2- normally covering that which was worked on the day before
   b- Briefing of the day's procedures
   c- Notifying the children of any variations

2. Book sharing period

3. Combined activities period

   a- Skill development
      1- group or class
      2- individual or small section
   b- Silent reading
      1- allows time to observe individual's reading habits
      2- perhaps work on records or charts
   c- Conferences and work session for children

4. Evaluation period

EXERCISE ONE

Saying Short Vowel Sounds in Rhymes

Ad, ed, id, od, ud,
Old stick in the mud.

Ap, ep, ip, op, up,
Do not drop the cup.

Am, em, im, om, um,
Add to find the sum.

An, en, in, on, un,
Let's have some fun!

At, et, it, ot, ut,
Oh, my finger's cut!

Ag, eg, ig, og, ug,
Where's the lady bug?

Can you think of any additional rhymes?

Exercise One

Directions

Provide a few moments for the children to read the rhymed couplets. Ask different children to read two lines apiece. Encourage accuracy and speed; however, remind them that the purpose is to say the sounds distinctly and correctly. Depending on the time allotted, you may wish to tape-record the responses or work briefly with choral speaking to increase clarity of group speech habits (which are sometimes lax at the beginning of the school year). This also offers a time for the children to create some two-lined rhymed poetry of their own following the oral presentation. Proper discussion of sequence and patternization of the couplets should be held with the children before they attempt any on their own. These children-created rhymes could be made into a bulletin board. Before placing the rhyme on the display board the child may wish to copy his or her lines over on a larger sheet of paper in crayon. If available, stencils could also be used to encourage neatness.

The children can work individually or in small groups at the bulletin board to practice on the newly created ideas. The whole class might spend a few minutes with the rhymes during those couple of moments before the bell, or lunchtime, etc.

EXERCISE TWO

Find the Vowel Diagraph in Each Word

sheep	meat	tails
veal	see	hair
dear	roads	sleep
goat	peach	seat
deer	coal	seek
oak	meal	sail

Say each carefully to yourself.

Is the following rule true for the above words?

> The first of a "double vowel" is usually long, while the second is silent.

What other words might we use to illustrate this rule?

Exercise Two

Directions

Give each child a strip of construction paper (approximately 2" x 4"). This strip can be used to cover the vowel diagraph during the oral group participation portion of the exercise. Following the teacher directed activity the child may then use the construction paper to write or print in crayon a word of his own choosing for display as a border along the chalkboard or bulletin board. Encourage the use of the dictionary in locating new and interesting words which follow the rule. Other strips of construction paper should also be available for children who wish to contribute more than one word. This should not, however, become a contest to see who can locate the most words.

During spare time within the academic schedule the teacher could easily lead a discussion on these displayed words which the children selected themselves. A few minutes spent by the children in an informal manner will often create a more lasting impression and more frequent use of the principles involved.

These words were chosen to aid the areas of speech and diction. Some children will find it necessary to practice the pronunciation of these words for proper oral clarity. This is especially true when the words must be read orally as listed in the columns, either vertically or horizontally.

EXERCISE THREE

The SCHWA Sound Usually Stands Alone

idea
alarm
adult

amiss
alert
afoot

adrift
aboard
atomic

diadem
abode
adore

amaze
Paula
above

along
amend
adapt

The vowel (a) used alone as a syllable, or at the end of a syllable, has its schwa (ə) sound when the syllable is not accented.

Write each word. Show where the schwa is and where the accent is in a separate column.

Exercise Three

Directions

Pronunciation of the schwa sound is usually a troublemaker for most children. A group activity, followed by individual written work, gives the children a better idea of this particular vowel's uses. Display the list of words so all of the children can easily see them. Ask the children to say each group of words quietly to themselves. Illustrate the schwa symbol on the chalkboard and the correct spelling for the word. Explain the meaning of the symbol before asking the children to say in unison "Does Alabama adore Alaska?" (duz al ə bam' ə ə dor' ə las' kə). Proceed with the question of how many times the schwa sound is heard in the sentence. It may be necessary to place the pronunciation of the sentence on the chalkboard to clarify the vowel sounds which they were hearing. Refer again to the chart or word list. Divide the children quickly into two groups. One child from each group will be needed as scorekeeper. The first child in each group steps forward to the chart or word list. Together the two children must select one group of three words. After they have agreed on the set of words which both are going to use, each child returns to his group (the group may be seated or in a line). Cover the words before letting the child start. When you say begin, he must whisper the set of words, in correct order, to the next person, etc., until the last person in line has received the message. This person then races to the chalkboard to write the words and circle the schwa vowel sound (this could be done on a sheet of paper, also). The first team correctly finished receives a point. Conclude by having the children in the winning group choose one of the children from the other group. He is to give the person selected a spelling quiz using the same list of words. Permit this to be done quietly, during spare classroom time, within the next couple of days. It must be signed by the tester and testee. Also require every child to write each word, print it in syllables showing the accent, and place the schwa vowel in the printed word. Direct their attention to the rule which is commonly applied to the use of schwa before they begin their written work.

EXERCISE FOUR

DISTINGUISHING VOWEL SOUNDS IN WORDS

hopped--hoped
patter--pater
stripped--striped
cellar--cedar
slopped--sloped
filled--filed
madder--maker
panned--paned
miller--miler
hatted--hated
fatted--fated
slatted--slated

Read each pair of words to see that one consonant after a single vowel, and before many word endings, makes the single vowel_____.*

*NOTE: The way in which this exercise is used with the class depends on the amount of knowledge the children already possess about pronunciation guides (rules). Many children may have difficulty seeing the difference between each word in the set. Group participation and oral usage of the words would be advisable as children need help in sight recognition and sounding out of words. Further work should be assigned as decided by the teacher.

EXERCISE FIVE

THESE ARE A FEW COMMON BOOK CATEGORIES.

BIOGRAPHY	MYSTERY
NOVEL	HISTORY
SCIENCE	SPORTS

Under which category or categories does each of these book titles belong?

"The Midnight Visitor"

"Babe Ruth Story"*

"Gregg's Microscope"

"Theodore Roosevelt"*

"Man's First Million Years"

"Betsy's Wedding"

"Paul Revere"*

"Paul Bunyan"

"First Wagons to California"*

"Wind Wagon Smith"*

"Football for Boys"

"Riflemen of the Ohio"*

---

* NOTE: The titles which have been starred are those which will most likely be placed under more than one category by the children, depending on their reasoning and ability to distinguish.

Exercise Five

Directions

After the children have become familiar with judging a book's subject matter to some extent by its title, provide a list of book titles. The list could be in alphabetical order or randomly placed. Have the children fold a piece of paper, either lined or unlined, into six divisions. If the children are unable to do this satisfactorily, they could fold the paper first into fourths, then eighths, which allows a space for the child's name, date and title. Label each section neatly using crayon or ink for an attractive contrast:

BIOGRAPHY	MYSTERY
NOVEL	HISTORY
SCIENCE	SPORTS

If the children are having difficulty with alignment it might be wise to illustrate on the chalkboard, or an overhead or opaque projector. Have each of the titles read orally. Suggest to the children that a book could be included in more than one area when being classified. Before the children begin to work independently on this exercise, remind them to think about each title apart from the others and make a decision based on what they <u>think</u>--not what they guess. When the children have completed the exercise it is advisable to spend some time orally discussing the placement of the titles and the reasons for their location in each category. The children will sometimes present logical reasons for their desisions which you had not considered.

BOOK TITLE & AUTHOR	DATE	SKILL & COMPREHENSION	ERRORS	ORAL READING	ACTIVITY

INDIVIDUAL CHILD READING RECORD

This type of chart could be easily dittoed or mimeographed for placement in manila folders. One folder should be made for each child--three or four sheets per folder for minimum start (additional pages can be added as needed.)

READING INFORMATION INVENTORY

Name_____ Sex_____ Age_____ Grade_____

Known Illnesses or Physical Difficulties_____

General Achievement: Academic_____Sports_____Extra_____

Special Instruction or Guidance Programs (previous or present)

_____ Date_____

_____ Date_____

_____ Date_____

_____ Date_____

Evaluate each area prior to close of grading period:

Reading Level.....						
Comprehension.....						
Phonics.....						
Sight Vocabulary.....						
Word Analysis.....						
Speed.....						
Reference Materials.....						
Study Skills.....						
Attention Span.....						
Attitude.....						

Special Interests_____

General Attitude (Home, school, class, teacher, etc.--not changes)

_____

Additional Comments:

A. Woodring
February 1967

Concluding Remarks

These are but a few of the ideas which an alert teacher may utilize in her classroom--a brief resume of a totally structured Individualized Reading Program. In order to have a working program an atmosphere must be developed in which a maximum of enjoyable, creative learning prevails with a minimum of confusion and frustration. The way in which this is achieved varies with each teacher and each group of children. The writer has used this technique in Language Arts, but hopes you will find use for it in your own classroom presentations. The intent was not to set guidelines, but rather to present material which has been used effectively in the classroom. It is hoped that these ideas open the road to "Individualized Reading" for you and your class.

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